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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

CM-307-75
17 March 1975

File "O"

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE **O+3**

Subj: US Military Presence in Argentina (U)

1. (S) I have reviewed once again the question of US military presence in Argentina, including the recent tragic events in that country and the 13 March letter to you from Acting Secretary Ingersoll. In light of all the facts, my conclusion remains that reduction of US military strength below present levels is unjustified and would render the Group incapable of adequately performing its mission.

2. (S) After reviewing the reasons set forth by the Department of State, both in past efforts to reduce our posture and in Mr. Ingersoll's latest letter, I still find no compelling rationale for a further reduction of US military presence in Argentina.

3. (S) Many of Mr. Ingersoll's conclusions are based upon facts that may well pertain to other parts of our mission in Buenos Aires, but have limited, if any, application to the military. It has not been our interpretation of the messages coming from Argentina that the military have been singled out as being in a "high risk category." Our reading of the reports would indicate the reverse. The Defense Intelligence Agency, on assessments made from reports from the Attaché Office in Buenos Aires, concurs in this assessment.

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4. (S) The fact remains that the military is frequently called upon to accept high risk assignments as a necessary aspect of military service. For the United States military to retreat in the face of a terrorist threat would, in my opinion, cause a more serious breach in our military-to-military relations with the Argentines than the disservice done to the Ambassador by one department not reducing its complement proportionately. I continue to question whether the proper response, particularly the response by the US Armed Forces to a terrorist threat, is "to diminish the number of targets. . . ." Likewise, I cannot accept the conjecture that should a kidnapping or assassination of a US military officer or enlisted man in Argentina occur,

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DJS m
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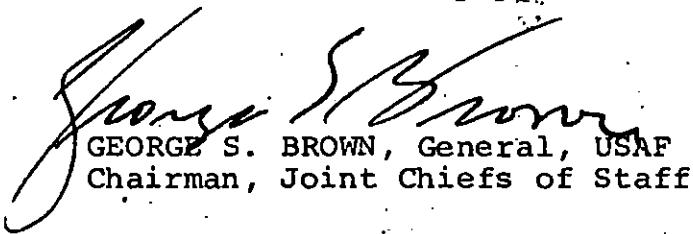
Declassified Case:
NW 54845 Date:
11-06-2017

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"it would evolve even greater diplomatic and political complications than a terrorist act against a US civilian because of the possible implications of a US military involvement in Argentina."

5. (S) Finally, while the technique of reducing the number of exposed targets may be useful as a countermeasure to an indiscriminate area threat, such as represented by a rocket attack, this measure is inappropriate for the type of threat posed in Argentina - the kidnapping of specifically targeted individuals.

6. (S) In summary, I recommend strongly that we not reduce the current military presence in Argentina.


GEORGE S. BROWN, General, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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REGISTER OF PERSONNEL HANDLING CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT

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14 Mar 75

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DOCUMENT NUMBER

**OFFICE, CHAIRMAN, JCS
ROOM 2E885, THE PENTAGON**

Orig w/encls

SUBJECT

US Military Presence in Argentina (II)

OJCS SUMMARY SHEET

834

TO: CJCS	CLASSIFICATION SECRET	FOR USE BY ORIGINATING DIRECTORATE J5M 409 X75 14 MAR 1975			
THRU: DJS HARRY D. TRAIN, II Vice Admiral, USN Director, Joint Staff	(1 Nov)	DJSM NO. 446-75	ODJS SUSPENSE DATE		
SUBJECT: US Military Presence in Argentina (U)		DJSM DATE 14 Mar 75			
		ACTION			
		APPROVAL	SIGNATURE	INFORMATION	OTHER
		XXXX			

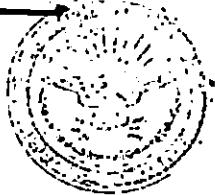
REMARKS

- (S) On 13 Nov 74, CJCS provided DepSecDef his views on the subject by memorandum, at TAB B. On 13 Mar 75, Acting Secretary of State Ingersoll sent a letter to SecDef again raising the question of the strength of the mission in Buenos Aires, in particular the military strength, stressing recent events that have occurred in Argentina. (TAB C) The letter stated that the Acting Secretary would telephone SecDef to discuss the issue within 24 hours.
- (S) AT TAB A is a draft memorandum from CJCS to SecDef reiterating the Chairman's position on the subject, for possible use by SecDef.

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ACTION OFFICER Cdr J. H. Slough Latin American Branch Ext 5-0510	COORDINATION/APPROVAL					
	OFFICE J-5	NAME <i>Champlain</i>	EXTENSION	OFFICE	NAME	EXTENSION
	J5 RADM P. J. HANNIFIN					
DATE OF PREPARATION 14 Mar 75						

JCS FORM NO. 9
JULY 72



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

CM-146-74

13 NOV 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE .

Subject: US Military Presence in Argentina (U)

1. (S) I have been informed that Ambassador Hill plans further reductions in the official US presence in Buenos Aires from 123 to 96 personnel. He apparently is under strong pressure from the Department of State because of concern over the terrorist threat in Argentina. The Ambassador's plans, arrived at without consultation with General Rosson, Commander in Chief, US Southern Command, call for an additional reduction in the US Military Group from 20 to 13 - a strength at which, in the opinion of General Rosson, the MILGP will be incapable of performing its mission satisfactorily. As you probably know, the present austere MILGP manning level represents a temporary reduction from the authorized strength of 29.

2. (S) While I fully appreciate the seriousness of the terrorist situation in Argentina, I am concerned that these reductions are being made unilaterally, without prior consultation with Department of Defense, and in disregard of the formal mission agreements in effect between the Government of Argentina and the United States. As an illustration of this latter point, I recently received a personal communication from General Hector Luis Fautario, Commanding General of the Argentine Air Force, requesting the re-establishment of two personnel removed from the Air Force Mission as a result of the temporary reduction of US personnel in July 1974. General Rosson advises me that the Chief, US Navy Mission, has received a letter from Rear Admiral Roccatagliata of the Argentine Navy Staff proposing that a US Navy advisor to the Argentine Naval War College be restored.

3. (S) Service in high risk areas is a necessary and accepted aspect of military service. For the United States military to back down in the face of a threat that the Argentine military faces in greater measure casts us in a decidedly unfavorable light. In this regard, I am not persuaded that the terrorist threat will be lessened appreciably by a reduction from 20 to 13 military personnel.

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4. (S) I strongly recommend that every effort be made to forestall further reductions in the current temporary manning level of 20 for the US Military Group in Argentina and request your support in this endeavor.

(Sgd) GEORGE S. BROWN

GEORGE S. BROWN, General, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 13, 1975

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Dear Jim:

In the wake of the murder of our Consular Agent in Cordoba, Argentina, I have again reviewed the exchange of correspondence between our Departments relating to the proposed temporary reduction in DOD official personnel in Argentina. This step is part of an over-all effort to limit the targets for possible terrorist action against the U.S. mission in Argentina. I firmly believe that the wise course of action is to support the temporary reductions which are recommended by Ambassador Hill.

The threat to the U.S. Government personnel in Argentina at this time is incontrovertible. The intelligence reports referred to in my letter of November 26 to Bill Clements provide graphic evidence of this. Ambassador Hill, with the endorsement of the Embassy's Security Watch Committee, has advised me that terrorism in Argentina remains a great danger to our mission. In the circumstances, prudence dictates that we reduce manning levels throughout the mission to the absolute minimum required to conduct essential U.S. business in Argentina until the security situation improves. We must act now to attempt to avert further tragedy and not react later to a fait accompli.

In his letter Bill Clements proposed that dependents of mission personnel be withdrawn from Argentina rather than principals. However, we believe that this measure would not serve to lower appreciably the mission's vulnerability to terrorist attack. Dependents have not been a major target for terrorist groups in Argentina. Women and children have been occasionally affected by the violence, but only as a

The Honorable
James R. Schlesinger,
Secretary of Defense.

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GDS

SEC DEF CONTR No. X-0784

result of physical proximity to a principal terrorist target. The only effective action is to diminish the number of targets among the official personnel in Argentina, especially those considered by the Security Watch Committee to be high risks. All military personnel are considered to be in this category.

The specific reductions proposed for each mission component were carefully programmed by the Ambassador in conjunction with members of his country team. I understand that the Commander of the MILGRP and the DATT participated in these deliberations. It was agreed that the vital duties of the mission elements could be carried out by the smaller staff which would remain. Other important work would necessarily be deferred until the security situation permitted the restoration of full personnel complements.

It is essential that every agency support the Ambassador's effort to conduct the mission in Argentina at the level he deems most advisable in this difficult period. Any absence of unanimity in applying the reduction leads to interagency recrimination and undermines the Ambassador's leadership. A determination by one agency not to reduce its personnel in Argentina will have an adverse impact on the morale of other mission sections hardpressed to meet work requirements with reduced personnel.

In his letter, Bill Clements noted that the U.S. military accepts assignments in high risk areas as a necessary aspect of military service. While I respect this fact, it is also true that the kidnapping or assassination of a U.S. military officer or enlisted man in Argentina would involve even greater diplomatic and political complications than a terrorist act against a U.S. civilian because of the possible implications of a U.S. military involvement in Argentina.

I share Bill Clements' concern that this matter be handled in keeping with the mission agreements in effect between the U.S. and Argentina. Although the

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record is not clear that the Government of Argentina was consulted prior to each reduction in MILGRP personnel from peak levels in FY-68, I agree that it would be desirable to consult in this instance. Accordingly, I would appreciate your concurring in a message to Buenos Aires instructing the Ambassador and the MILGRP Commander to call on the Minister of Defense or his designee to explain these reductions, and to emphasize their temporary nature. We would then be in a position to effect the proposed reduction of the MILGRP from 20 to 13. With respect to the DAO, I propose that we move ahead immediately to approve and implement the proposed temporary reduction from 11 to 7 by moving the Attache aircraft to a neighboring country for a time.

Let me emphasize that the Department of State regards it as important to the U.S. interest to maintain good relations with the Argentine military. At such time as the terrorist threat in Argentina diminishes significantly, it is fully intended that the MILGRP and DAO personnel complements be returned to normal levels. Meanwhile, Ambassador Hill has urged that we not postpone action on this matter any longer. I hope you will agree with me to support his position.

I wanted you to have this explanation of our view in writing before discussing it with you. I will be telephoning you within the next twenty-four hours to solicit your support.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,



Robert S. Ingersoll
Acting Secretary

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